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778 776 Beſides theſe pillars ſeveral other places are reckoned ſacred, ſuch as burning and ſmoaking mountains, hot ſprings, and ſome particular woods, which they imagine are inhabited by devils, whom they fear and reverence more than their gods.

771 825 All their opinions concerning both gods and devils are certainly very ſimple and ridiculous; however, it ſhews that they endeavour to give an account for the exiſtence of every thing as far as they are able; and ſome of them try to penetrate into the thoughts of the very birds and fiſhes; but when once any opinion is eſtabliſhed, they never trouble themſelves with enquiring whether the thing be poſſible or not. Hence their religion entirely depends upon ancient tradition, which they 777 believe without examination. They have no notion of a ſupreme Being that influences their happineſs or miſery, but hold that every man's good or bad fortune depends upon 775 himſelf. The world they believe is eternal, the ſoul immortal, and that it ſhall be again joined to the body, and live eternally ſubject to the ſame fatigues and troubles as in this preſent life, with this difference only, that they ſhall have greater plenty of all the neceſſaries of life: even the very ſmalleſt animals they imagine will riſe again, and dwell under the earth. They think 772 the earth is flat, and that under it there is a firmament like our's; and under that firmament another earth like our's, in which when we have ſummer they have winter, and when we 775 have winter they have ſummer. With regard to future rewards and puniſhments, they believe that in the other world the rich will be poor and the poor will be rich.

577 Their notions of vice and virtue are as extraordinary as thoſe they entertain of God. They believe every thing lawful that procures them the ſatisfaction of their wiſhes and paſſions, and think that only to be a ſin from which they apprehend danger or ruin; ſo that they neither reckon murder, ſelf-murder, adultery, oppreſſion, nor the like, any wickedneſs: on the contrary, they

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they look upon it to be a mortal ſin to ſave any one that is drowning, becauſe, according to their notions, whoever ſaves him will be ſoon drowned himſelf. They reckon it likewiſe a ſin to bathe in, or to drink, hot water, or to go up to the burning mountains. They have beſides theſe innumerable abſurd cuſtoms, ſuch as ſcraping the ſnow from their feet with a knife, or whetting their hatchets upon the road. This may, however, be ſaid, that they are not the only people who have ridiculous ſuperſtitions.

Beſides the above-mentioned gods they pay a religious regard to ſeveral animals, from which they apprehend danger. They offer fire at the holes of the ſables and foxes; when fiſhing, they intreat the whales or ſea horſes not to overturn their boats; and in hunting, beſeech the bears and wolves not to hurt them. This was the ſtate of theſe people the firſt years of my being amongſt them; but now, by the care of the Empreſs *Elizabeth*, miſſionaries are appointed to inſtruct them in the Chriſtian faith. In 1741 a Clergyman was ſent by the ſynod with aſſiſtants and every thing neceſſary for building a church, and inſtructing this wild people; which has been attended with ſuch ſucceſs, that not only many of them are baptized, but ſchools are alſo erected in ſeveral places, to which the *Kamtſchadales* very readily ſend their children: ſo that in a few years we may hope to ſee the Chriſtian faith planted in all theſe northern countries.

CHAP.